

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

RELEASED IN PART
B1, 1.4(D)PAGE 01 CARACA 01622 01 OF 04 132212Z
ACTION ARA-01

INFO	LOG-00	ACDA-15	AID-01	AMAD-01	CIAE-00	C-01	DODE-00
	EB-01	HA-09	H-01	INRE-00	INR-01	IO-19	LAB-04
	L-03	ADS-00	NSAE-00	NSCE-00	OIC-02	OMB-01	PA-01
	PM-01	PRS-01	P-01	RP-10	SIL-01	SNP-01	SP-01
	SR-01	SSC-01	SS-01	STR-20	TRSE-00	T-01	FMP-01

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P 132211Z FEB 92
FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8352
USIA WASHDC 7750

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 01 OF 04 CARACAS 01622

STATE FOR ARA/AND
USIA FOR AR ATTN:DOUG ROSE AND JOE JOHNSON;
P/G

E.O. 12356: N/A
TAGS: PGOV, PREL, PHUM, VE
SUBJECT: [REDACTED] COMMENTS ON THE
COUP ATTEMPT AND GOV DECISION [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

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1. SUMMARY: PAO MET FOR OVER AN HOUR FEBRUARY 11
WITH [REDACTED]
TO DISCUSS HIS IMPRESSIONS OF THE COUP ATTEMPT AND
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ITS SIGNIFICANCE FOR PRESIDENT CARLOS ANDRES PEREZ'S
GOVERNMENT. THE DISCUSSION CENTERED ON THE REBEL'S
MOTIVES; WHAT CHANGES IF ANY ARE PLANNED IN THE
CARRYING OUT OF THE PRESIDENT'S ECONOMIC REFORM
PLANS; THE ISSUE OF THE SUSPENSION OF SEVERAL
CONSTITUTIONAL GUARANTEES, PARTICULARLY THE FREEDOM
OF THE PRESS PROVISIONS; AND INTERNATIONAL MEDIA
TREATMENT OF THE COUP ATTEMPT.

[REDACTED] THINKS THAT PRESIDENT PEREZ WILL NOT

B1

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
CLASSIFIED BY DEPT. OF STATE, L. R. LOHMAN, DAS, A/ISS
REVIEW AUTHORITY: OSCAR J OLSON
CLASSIFICATION: CONFIDENTIAL REASON: 1.4(D)
DECLASSIFY AFTER: 12 FEB 2012
DATE/CASE ID: 14 NOV 2006 200503206

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DEVIATE FROM HIS ECONOMIC REFORM PLANS THOUGH HE MAY
"ACCELERATE" SOCIAL PROGRAMS TO REASSURE DISCONTENTED
VOTERS. [REDACTED] WAS PERSONALLY OPPOSED TO THE
[REDACTED] BUT
THE MINISTRY OF INTERIOR CONVINCED THE PRESIDENT OF
THE NECESSITY TO SEND CENSORS TO MEDIA ORGANIZATIONS
AND TO PREVENT THE DISTRIBUTION OF SOME PUBLICATIONS
WHICH EXAGGERATED DOMESTIC DISCONTENT AND PRESENTED
REBEL LEADER LT. COL. HUGO CHAVEZ FRIAS IN A
FAVORABLE LIGHT. WHILE [REDACTED] FAVORED THE QUICK
REMOVAL OF THE CENSORS, [REDACTED]

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CONSTITUTIONAL GUARANTEE SU MAY CONTINUE FOR
SOME TIME SINCE THE 10 DAY PERIOD REFERRED TO AT THE
TIME OF THE SUSPENSION APPLIES ONLY TO A PRESIDENTIAL
DECREE AND SINCE THE VENEZUELAN CONGRESS HAS NOW
APPROVED THE TIME LIMIT, THE SUSPENSION CAN REMAIN IN
FORCE UNTIL THE PRESIDENT AND THE CONGRESS DECIDE
THAT THE THREAT TO DOMESTIC TRANQUILITY HAS ENDED.

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HE DID NOT KNOW HOW LONG THE TRIALS OF THE ACCUSED
REBELS WOULD LAST BUT POINTED OUT THAT WHILE THE
"SUMMARY" PROCESS BY WHICH THE PRESIDENT IS PRESENTED
WITH EVIDENCE UPON WHICH HE CAN MAKE A DECISION ON
WHETHER OR NOT TO PROCEED WITH TRIALS CAN MOVE FAIRLY
QUICKLY, IF THE PRESIDENT CHOOSES TO PROCEED THEN
EACH ACCUSED HAS THE RIGHT TO A SEPARATE TRIAL AND
THAT HE WOULD NOT HAZARD A GUESS AS TO HOW LONG IT
WOULD TAKE. HE STRESSED THE HISTORIC SLOWNESS OF THE
JUDICIAL PROCESS--MILITARY AND CIVIL. HE THINKS THE
AGREEMENT WITH MEDIA OWNERS ON WHAT IS, IN EFFECT,
SELF-CENSORSHIP WILL HOLD AND THAT RESPONSIBLE VOICES
IN THE MEDIA COMMUNITY WILL RECOGNIZE THEIR
OBLIGATION TO HELP CALM THE NATION. HE CITED
EXAMPLES OF LOCAL MEDIA EXCESS AND CLAIMED THAT WHILE
MANY STORIES BY FOREIGN JOURNALISTS WERE ACCURATE AND
REASONABLY FAIR THERE HAVE BEEN SOME NOTABLE
EXCEPTIONS (NOTE: NO U.S. PUBLICATION WAS CITED).
DESPITE THE EFFORTS OF POLITICAL OPPONENTS AND
"SUBVERSIVE ELEMENTS" TO CREATE PROBLEMS FOR THE
PRESIDENT, CAP HAS SHOWN HIS DETERMINATION AND
ABILITY TO CARRY OUT HIS PROGRAM FOR THE REMAINDER OF
HIS TERM. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]
 HE APPRECIATED DEMONSTRATIONS
 OF U.S SUPPORT FOR THE VENEZUELAN DEMOCRATIC
 PROCESS. HE BELIEVES THAT PRESIDENT PEREZ WILL STICK
 TO HIS PLANS TO TRAVEL TO SAN ANTONIO FOR THE DRUG
 SUMMIT AND HE LOOKS FORWARD TO WORKING WITH THE
 EMBASSY ON PUBLIC AWARENESS PROGRAMMING EFFORTS IN
 THE DRUG ABUSE AREA. END SUMMARY.

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2. [REDACTED]
 [REDACTED] TO DISCUSS [REDACTED]
 [REDACTED] IMPRESSIONS OF THE COUP ATTEMPT AND HIS
 VIEWS ON PRESIDENT CARLOS ANDRFS PEREZ'S PLANS TO
 CONTINUE HIS ECONOMIC REFORM EFFORTS. [REDACTED]

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SR-01 SS-01 STR-20 TRSE-00 T-01 FMP-01 /101W

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P 132211Z FEB 92
FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8353
USIA WASHDC 7751

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 02 OF 04 CARACAS 01622

STATE FOR ARA/AND
USIA FOR AR ATTN:DOUG ROSE AND JOE JOHNSON;
P/G

E.O. 12356: N/A
TAGS: PGOV. PREL. PHUM. VE
SUBJECT: [REDACTED]

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3. THE MEETING TOOK PLACE IN [REDACTED] OFFICE,
HE WAS UPBEAT AND, AS IS HIS WONT, HE DELIVERED
LENGTHY RESPONSES TO EVERY QUESTION. OFTEN HE
DIGRESSED TO MAKE A POINT ABOUT HOW WELL THE PEREZ
ADMINISTRATION HAS RESPONDED TO THE NEEDS OF THE
SOCIETY AND HOW CAP'S EFFORTS HAVE BEEN
INSUFFICIENTLY APPRECIATED.

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4. AMONG HIS COMMENTS WERE:
A) HIS WHEREABOUTS ON THE NIGHT OF TH COUP ATTEMPT:

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[REDACTED]

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THEN GOT INTO HIS CAR AND HEADED FOR LA CASONA TO
MEET WITH THE PRESIDENT. AS HE NEARED THE
PRESIDENTIAL RESIDENCE HE NOTED SOME TROOPS NEAR THE
ENTRANCE AND A "ROCKET" WAS FIRED OVER HIS CAR WHICH
HIT AND BADLY DAMAGED A PARKED CAR. HE QUICKLY LEFT
THE SCENE WITHOUT FURTHER INCIDENT AND PROCEEDED TO
HIS OFFICE. ONCE THERE HE AGAIN CALLED [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] HE WAS UNABLE TO REACH CAP BUT WHEN HE
TURNED ON HIS TELEVISION HE SAW CAP DELIVERING HIS
STATEMENT TO THE NATION FROM CHANNEL 4'S STUDIOS-

[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] DURING
THE AFTERNOON, IN AN EFFORT TO "LET YOUNG PEOPLE KNOW
WHAT A DICTATORSHIP IS LIKE", [REDACTED]

B1

[REDACTED] THE COSTA-GAVRAS FILM "MISSING"
ABOUT THE MILITARY SEIZING POWER IN CHILE.

B) CAP'S ECONOMIC REFORM PLANS:

CAP WILL STAY THE COURSE BECAUSE EVEN IF IT MAY BE
UNPOPULAR IT IS WORKING; THE STATISTICS AND COMMENTS
BY THE INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS COMMUNITY SHOW THAT.
THE PRESIDENT MAY NEED TO "ACCELERATE" HIS SOCIAL
SERVICES PROGRAM PARTICULARLY IN HEALTH, EDUCATION
AND WATER DELIVERY SYSTEMS. CAP HAS MADE CLEAR TO
HIS ADVISORS: THE ECONOMIC MODERNIZATION PROGRAM MUST
MOVE AHEAD BECAUSE IT IS THE BEST OPTION FOR
VENEZUELAN PROSPERITY.

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C) CENSORSHIP OF THE MEDIA:

IT WAS AN UNFORTUNATE DECISION TO SEND IN CENSORS TO
MEDIA ORGANIZATIONS. [REDACTED]

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HOWEVER CONVINCED THE PRESIDENT THAT EVEN IF IT WAS
UNPOPULAR IT WAS NECESSARY TO HELP STABILIZE THE
COUNTRY. TOO MANY MAGAZINES AND NEWSPAPERS
SENSATIONALIZED AND GLORIFIED THE REBELS' LEADERS AND
DISTORTED THE REBELS' INTENTIONS AS REPRESENTING THE
FRUSTRATIONS AND THE WILL OF THE WORKING CLASS. THE
AGREEMENT WITH THE MEDIA OWNERS WILL HOLD BECAUSE

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P 132211Z FEB 92
FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8354
USIA WASHDC 7752

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 03 OF 04 CARACAS 01622

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STATE FOR ARA/AND
USIA FOR AR ATTN:DOUG ROSE AND JOE JOHNSON;
P/G

E.O. 12356: N/A
TAGS: PGOV, PREL, PHUM, VE
SUBJECT: MINISTER OF INFORMATION COMMENTS ON THE

THEY ARE RESPONSIBLE MEN BUT TOO MANY VENEZUELAN
JOURNALISTS AND PHOTOGRAPHERS ARE SEARCHING FOR WAYS
TO EMBARRASS THE GOVERNMENT OR CAP PERSONALLY.
BECAUSE OF HIS OWN VIEW THAT CENSORSHIP IS WRONG--A
VIEW HE CHAMPIONED EVEN DURING HIS CONGRESSIONAL
DAYS-

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AS EXAMPLES OF MEDIA SENSATIONALISM HE CITED THE
SEIZURE OF A LITTLE-READ MAGAZINE, "ELITE", ON THE
WEEK-END. THE GOV OBJECTION WAS TO THE COVER:
PHOTOS SIDE-BY-SIDE OF CAP AND REBEL LEADER CHAVEZ;
AN OLD PHOTO OF CAP WITH HIS ARM IN EITHER A SLING OR
CAST AS THE RESULT OF SOME ACCIDENT YEARS AGO AND THE
YOUTHFUL, STRONG, SERIOUS CHAVEZ LOOKING LIKE A BOLD
LEADER. WHY DIDN'T THEY TAKE ANY ONE OF A THOUSAND
OTHER PICTURES WHICH SHOWED CAP CARRYING OUT HIS
DUTIES? OTHER PUBLICATIONS RAN PHOTOS WHICH DEPICTED
EITHER THE REBELS IN HEROIC POSES OR CONCENTRATED ON
THE ECONOMIC SUFFERING OF THE POORER CLASSES, THEREBY
LINKING THE REBELS TO THE CAUSE OF THE POOR. FOREIGN
MEDIA REPORTING IN GENERAL HAS BEEN BALANCED (A
RECENT ISSUE OF THE "ECONOMIST" WAS CITED FOR ITS
ACUTE ANALYSIS) BUT THERE HAVE BEEN EXCEPTIONS SUCH
AS A SPANISH MAGAZINE WHICH DISTORTED VENEZUELA'S
HISTORY AND RECENT DEMOCRATIC ACHIEVEMENTS.

D) MILITARY TRIALS FOR THE REBELS:

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THESE ARE SECRET, LENGTHY PROCEEDINGS. THE FIRST
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STEP IS A SUMMARY PHASE IN WHICH THE COURT PRESENTS
ITS ARGUMENTS TO THE PRESIDENT WHO WILL DETERMINE IF
THERE IS ENOUGH EVIDENCE TO PROCEED WITH TRIAL. IN
THE CASE OF THE 1988 "NIGHT OF THE TANKS" EPISODE,
PRESIDENT LUSINCHI DETERMINED THERE WAS INSUFFICIENT
EVIDENCE TO PROCEED WITH A TRIAL AND THE PROCESS
ENDED THERE. THIS TIME THERE WILL CERTAINLY BE
SUFFICIENT EVIDENCE TO TRY MANY--BUT PERHAPS NOT
ALL--OF THE ARRESTED. ACCORDING TO VENEZUELAN LAW
EACH PERSON HAS A RIGHT TO HIS OWN INDIVIDUAL TRIAL
SINCE CIRCUMSTANCES OF INVOLVEMENT MAY VARY FROM
INDIVIDUAL TO INDIVIDUAL. THAT BEING THE CASE THERE
COULD POSSIBLY BE OVER 1,000 TRIALS. THE PROCESS
MOVES SLOWLY AND IT WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE TO HAZARD A
GUESS AS TO HOW LONG IT MIGHT TAKE. THERE IS NO
PROVISION FOR TRYING PEOPLE IN CIVILIAN COURT AFTER
THEY HAVE BEEN JUDGED IN MILITARY COURTS. THE JUDGE
AND THE ATTORNEYS ARE PROHIBITED FROM SPEAKING WITH
JOURNALISTS AND OTHERS DURING THE TRIAL.

E) HOW LONG WILL SUSPENSION OF CONSTITUTIONAL
GUARANTEES LAST:

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ONCE THE PRESIDENT ISSUES A DECREE THAT
DECREE IS IN EFFECT FOR A MAXIMUM OF TEN DAYS. THEN
THE MATTER IS RAISED WITH THE CONGRESS. IN THIS CASE
THE CONGRESS APPROVED THE SUSPENSION THE SAME
AFTERNOON AND SO THERE IS NO TEN DAY LIMIT-- THE
SUSPENSION CAN LAST AS LONG AS THE PRESIDENT AND
CONGRESS FEEL IT IS WARRANTED. THE PRESIDENT HAS NOT
YET MADE A DECISION. SOME SAY IT MAY STAY IN EFFECT
UNTIL AFTER THE ANNIVERSARY OF FEBRUARY 27TH (THE

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LAST MAJOR CIVIL DISTURBANCE HERE IN WHICH PERHAPS
HUNDREDS OF PEOPLE WERE KILLED IN A PROTEST OVER
RISING PRICES AND ALLEGED INJUSTICES) BUT THERE IS NO
INDICATION THAT ANY GROUP PLANS VIOLENT
DEMONSTRATIONS TO COMMEMORATE THE ANNIVERSARY.

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(NOTE - AS PREVIOUSLY REPORTED, MISSION HAS BEEN INFORMED THAT THE PRESIDENT PLANS TO RESTORE THE CONSTITUTIONAL GUARANTEE ON FREEDOM OF THE PRESS ARTICLE 66 ON FEBRUARY 14).

5. THE MEETING CONCLUDED SHORTLY AFTER

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P 132211Z FEB 92
FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8355
USIA WASHDC 7753

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 04 OF 04 CARACAS 01622

STATE FOR ARA/AND
USIA FOR AR ATTN:DOUG ROSE AND JOE JOHNSON;
P/G

E.O. 12356: N/A
TAGS: PGOV. PREL. PHUM. VE
SUBJECT:

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AGREED TO AN INTERVIEW LATER IN THE DAY.

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6. COMMENT:

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WILL BE INEFFECTIVE

IN DEVELOPING A MORE POSITIVE IMAGE FOR THE PRESIDENT
AMONG THOSE CLASSES OF THE POPULACE WHICH ARE MOST
SUSPICIOUS OF CAP'S CHARACTER AND CRITICAL OF HIS
GOVERNMENT'S APPARENT INABILITY OR UNWILLINGNESS TO
EFFECTIVELY DEAL WITH THE ISSUES OF INEQUITABLE
DISTRIBUTION OF WEALTH, CORRUPTION, INADEQUATE HEALTH
AND TRIAL SERVICES, CRIME AND AN INEPT EDUCATIONAL
SYSTEM. SKOL

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